1: Box 11 E-4 (no date) 1952 FL11 Lwo FL11

776 believed to be the creator and originator of all things but he is not worshipped. Birth and death are ascribed to his action. According to Hanson, Nyasa is found in large trees, and in time of trouble or sickness offerings are made to him of an animal killed under a large tree; the meat is eaten at a little distance away.(1)

[773] Johnston states that the Lwo believe in a supreme god, Chwong, which is the same for the sun.(2) Dhan, however, relegates the sun to an inferior position and writes that when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and then to the north, south and west and implores the sun to give him good luck.(3) Northcote states that Lwo worship the sun and, to a lesser degree, the moon. A similar spitting ritual is practised when the new moon appears.(4)

It is impossible at present to give a comprehensive account of Lwo beliefs from the scanty information available.

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

● 775 There is very little information on the ancestral cult. Evans-Pritchard describes a troublesome ghost (*jwiem*, pl. *jwiemdi*) and the Lwo methods of dealing with it. *Jwiem* is the Lwo equivalent of the Shilluk *ocen*, the Anholi *lwem*, Lango *ekpen* and the Acholi *mirmi*. A spirit which has been forgotten by the living; the ghost of a man who died resentful or angry - or of a murdered man whose kin have not exacted revenge - any of these may become a *jwiem*, and cause harm to those who wronged it. The Lwo regard ghosts as one of the principal causes of sickness and other misfortune, and, since it is held that almost any wrong done to a kinsman may be punished by him after death, this belief is a powerful sanction of conduct within the family and kinship group.(5)

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775 The diviner (*nyango*) discovers the cause of sickness and, if it is due to a particular spirit, sacrifices are offered at his grave with appro-775 priate ritual. If the ghost is not appeased by this attention, another magician is called in, the *ngolo*. To protect the sick man's homestead the *ngolo* buries in or near it a pot containing medicines. In the last resort the *jadilo* is called in; as in sacrifices and the ghost warned that if he does not cease his activities his bones will be dug up, burned and the ashes thrown into the lake or marsh.

775 Normally, a ghost only haunts a kinsman, but a man who has been mur-783 dered may haunt his murderer. Purificatory rites are performed for anyone who has killed a man in battle; these are conducted by a man called *jagot* who has himself slain a man in battle.

775 It is believed that some ghosts become nature spirits dwelling in water and air, while others occupy the gourds used by diviners and answer the questions put to them.

(1) Hanson, *The Northern Nuers*, 1915, p.291.
(2) Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, 1902, Vol.II, p.791.
(3) Dhan, *Anthropos*, 1930, p.360.
(4) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.43
(5) Evans-Pritchard, *Man*, 1950 (July), No.133, p.86.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1908) 1902 FL11 Loss FL11

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When a chief dies the son chosen by the chief succeeds him; the successor is chosen as a rule some years before the chief dies. The successor will however divide the private property of his father with his brothers like anyone else.

Religion.—They call the Divinity by the name Chiong, which is the sun; when a man comes out of his house in the morning he spits to the east and in the evening he expectorates to the west. If the sunset is extremely red it is said to be a sign that an important man will die in the tribe. They believe that the spirit of a man goes upwards at death.

If a hailstorm occurs no one goes to work in the fields on the following day. Shooting stars are said to be a sign of war.

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S: Rabbey G-5 (no. 1900) 1901 PL11 Loo PL11

children that he had left a beautiful country in the heavens where the people were all bright like fire, and that when they were dead, they would all go and meet those people.

Ramogi, the great grandson of Ajuridde, taught the Ja-Luo the custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk.

Mbonga, the eldest son of Ramogi, was the first member of the Ja-Luo to migrate southward into Kavirondo, and his brothers followed him; upon their arrival, they found the Bantu Kavirondo in possession of the land, but gradually drove them back.

The Bantu Kavirondo are descended from one Magonaga. . .

The Masai are descended from a Ja-Luo youth who, when out one day herding cattle, absconded into the woods, driving off the cattle; a woman who was lazy, and would not cultivate, crept away and joined him, and they became the progenitors of the Masai; they live by eating herbs and drinking milk to this day.

The Nandi and Lumbwa are descended from Alunga, a son of Ramogi.

Rajidi, a son of Ajuridde, is the ancestor of all the other people on earth, Europeans, etc.

This account was given me by an old chief living away in the hills to the south of Kavirondo Gulf, a man who has probably not seen half a dozen Europeans in the whole of his life. He told me that, in his youth, the old chiefs had many more legends, but the young men of to-day took but little interest in such things, and they were all rapidly being forgotten. He confided to me that his neighbours imputed to him the power of being able to transform himself at will into the shape of an ox and other animals, but he gravely assured me that these slanders were quite unfounded, and were a source of great embarrassment to him.

The version of the legend, given above, differs considerably from those previously recorded, and many new names appear. Most of the new names, however, are the names of tribes living in South Kavirondo, or Ugoya as it is often called, *e.g.*, Nyanduga, Kalandanya, Kalondo, Kaloch, Kadou, Uchiong. As these were near neighbours of his ancestors, their names would be more likely to be remembered.

There is, I think, enough internal evidence to show that this is really a very ancient genealogy, brought down from the Nile valley by the people when they migrated to the south.

An examination of the three versions of the genealogy of the Ja-Luo just given will lay bare many discrepancies, the presence of which, to my mind, gives an air of great genuineness to the information, and is, in a way, proof of the age of the myth.

Like the genealogy of the Uganda kings given in Mr. Roscoe's paper,[1] and, for the matter of that, like many other genealogies of world-wide fame in the ancient history of more civilised countries, we have in the Ja-Luo genealogy a succession of mythical personages and demigods at one end of the line, and at the other end,

[1] *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xxxii, p. 25, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," Plates I and II.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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CHAPTER XXVI

SICKNESS, DEATH, BURIAL, WARFARE, INDUSTRIES, RELIGION AND RELATIONSHIPS

Treatment of the sick—ghostly possession—death and mourning—death of a wife—manner of conducting warfare—treatment of a warrior who has slain one of the enemy—agricultural pursuits—cow-keeping—oxen used as riding animals—mode of building—religious beliefs—terms of relationships.

Treatment of the sick. Sickness is thought to be due to one of two causes: it may be, and the people think most frequently is, the result of magic which has been worked by some person who wishes to give pain or even to cause death because of a grievance, real or imaginary; or it may be due to some ghost. Under either circumstance, when a serious case of sickness occurs, the family seek the aid of a medicine-man who by his various tests and incantations discovers the cause; and, in a case where magic has been worked, he not only discovers the cause but also discloses the name of the culprit, who is thereupon sought and asked to give his motive for afflicting the sick person, and is paid to release him from the spell. Should the man have intended to kill the other because he has suffered some discourtesy or received some offence at his hands, he would probably have speared his shadow, so that the sick person will die unless the spell or magic is removed. Again, it may be that some magic has been worked and certain objects have been hidden near the house which are causing the sickness; these have to be removed and the spell broken before any drugs or treatment will avail the sick man. The perpetrator will only remove these when his grievance has been settled and he has received the needful compensation. In the case of a ghost, the medicine-man will tell which ghost is working the trouble and why it is thus causing sickness.

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10: Reecoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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753 The ghosts are usually those of grandparents who afflict
755 grandchildren because their father has failed to fulfil the
775 duties of a son to his father in his old age, either by direct unkindness or by neglect. The medicine-man will now order
769 a shrine to be built by the grave of the grandparent concerned, and the sick person's father offers a goat or a sheep at the grave, pouring out the blood as an offering upon the ground, and then eating the meat on the spot with a few relatives. The medicine-man is afterwards able to treat the sick man with reasonable hope of restoring him to health, because the offended ghost has now been pacified and will allow the sick man to benefit by the treatment. Sometimes sickness is transferred to another person by rubbing herbs over the sick man and burying them in the road for some other person to walk over and thus contract the disease.

828 **Ghostly possession.** Fits are supposed to be the manifesta-
775 tion of ghostly possession. They can often be overcome by
761 giving the person warm blood to drink drawn from the veins of an ox and by feeding the patient with a generous diet. During the time a fit lasts the man is held down, if he is violent, until the attack is over. Should a man fall into the fire during a fit, no help is rendered and he is allowed to burn to death, because it is said that the ghost has claimed him and would resent any interference and would affect the person who attempted to rescue the stricken man with a similar malady. A drum beaten near a person subject to fits is said to bring on an attack of the malady.

764 **Death and mourning.** When a person dies, his legs are bent up into a squatting posture, the right arm is raised under the head and the death-wail commences. The dead are not washed but merely have their ornaments stripped off; an ox or a cow is then killed and the body is wrapped in the skin and is stitched up tightly in it. The grave is dug in the house. When the body is laid in it, all the relatives stand round with their backs towards it and, at a given signal, they stoop down and with their hands scrape the earth into the grave without looking where it falls. After they have scraped in earth for some moments they walk out of the house, and the brother of

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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765 she makes a new girdle from papyrus while still at the river, and wears it as she returns to her village. She is then free to remarry.

775 Dead people are sometimes said to come to life again. This is reported to take place within a short time after death. It is said that the spirit had gone on a journey and had returned after the man was thought to be dead, but in time to stop the funeral. The supposed dead person sneezes and revives, the sneezing being thought to be the signal that the spirit has returned from his journey.

764 **Death of a wife.** Should a wife die before her husband, her body is buried in the house, and, when the husband dies, he is buried in the goat-house near. He may not be buried in the same house with his wife. The animal offered at a man's funeral is always an ox, while it is an old cow that is offered at a woman's funeral. The skin from the animal is used to wrap the body as a shroud. The meat from the animal is divided in the following manner: a shoulder is retained for the dead and is eaten by the mourners at the grave, the second shoulder is for the relatives in the village, and the remainder, with the exception of the neck, is for the guests who live at a distance: the neck is given to the medicine-man.

766 762 A suicide is buried in the open, never in a house. Should the death have taken place in a house, it is burned down, for no one will live in it.

Warfare.

721 **Mode of conducting wars.** The people are not fond of war and fortunately their wars are never very serious matters. Cattle-lifting and women-stealing are the chief causes of fighting. The battles take place after short notice, when it is found that cattle have been robbed or when the alarm is given that a woman has been captured by some other clan. When a fight is impending, the attacking party drive a few cows to some spot where the other party may see them and challenge the others to come and take them. The party challenged must either attempt to carry off the cows while the others protect them, or they must pay a fine imposed by the attacking army.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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The warriors are armed with long-bladed spears and use large shields three feet high and of a V shape, behind which the bearer crouches and is completely hidden. The shields are made of cow-hide and are so dried that they are hard enough to resist a spear-thrust. Each warrior is painted with red and white clay in fantastic designs and wears a head-dress. Some of the head-dresses are like helmets adorned with ostrich feathers, while others are small straw hats such as a child's doll might wear.

The battle is decided when the cattle are carried off by the one party or when the other party prove themselves strong enough to retain them. The victors dictate terms of peace and the vanquished pay a fine in cattle and women.

Treatment of a warrior who has slain one of the enemy. When a warrior kills another in battle, he is isolated from his village, lives in a separate hut some four days, and an old woman cooks his food and feeds him like a child because he is forbidden to touch any food. On the fifth day he is escorted to the river by another man who washes him, a white goat is killed and cooked by the attendant, who feeds the man with the meat, the goat-skin is cut into strips and put upon the man's wrists and round his head, and he returns to his temporary home for the night. The next day he is again taken to the river and washed, and a white fowl is presented him. He kills it and it is cooked for him, and he is again fed with the meat. He is then pronounced to be clean and may return to his home. It sometimes happens that a warrior spears another man in battle and the latter dies from the wound some time after. When death takes place, the relatives go to the warrior and tell him of the death, and he is separated at once from the community until the ceremonies above described have been performed. The people say that the ceremonies are necessary in order to release the ghost of the dead man, which is bound to the warrior who slew him and is only released on the fulfilment of the ceremonies. Should a warrior refuse to fulfil the ceremonies, the ghost will ask, "Why don't you fulfil the ceremonies and let me go?" Should the man still refuse to comply, the ghost will take him by the throat and strangle him.

775 133 In one form or another the word *cien*, and in some degree the notion of ghostly vengeance for which
171 it stands, have been recorded for a number of Nilotic languages: *cien* for the Shilluk and Nuer, *acien* for the Dinka, *acieni* for the Anuak, *tchien* for the Luo of the Bahr al-Ghazal, *lacen* for the Acholi, and *chyen* for the Lango.

753 Very little is known about this concept among the Luo of
755 Kenya. Roscoe (*The Northern Bantu*, 1915, pp. 285f. and
775 289) tells us that sickness may be due to a ghost, and that a medicine-man is consulted to find out which ghost is causing the trouble and the cause of its dissatisfaction. These troublesome ghosts are usually those of grandparents who afflict their grandchildren because their children have been neglectful of filial duties. The medicine-man orders a shrine to be built by the grave of the aggrieved grandparent and the sick person's father there offers a sacrifice. Ghosts may also possess persons and cause them to have fits. When a man kills another in war the ghost of the dead man is thought to cling to his slayer until it is released by ceremonies. Other writers on the Luo do not add to this information, and in view of our ignorance about the subject I record what few notes I have on it.

775 A troublesome ghost is called *jacien* (plur. *jociendi*), a
626 word translated 'devil' by the Fathers of St. Joseph's Society (*A Handbook of the Kavirondo Language*, 1920, p. 8). When a ghost is aggrieved it is unhappy among the dead and may cause injury to those who wronged it in life, the verb *cieno* and the noun *cien* being used to describe this ghostly vengeance. In the course of my inquiries I was told that the following are typical reasons for a dead person haunting a kinsman: a man is killed and his kinsmen do not exact vengeance or compensation for his death; a man dies unmarried owing to lack of cattle; a man is blamed for some action and commits suicide; a girl is forced into marriage and commits suicide; a son dies while resentful because his father has favoured his brothers; a married woman dies after being accused of witchcraft and beaten; a man dies in a state of shame for some action of his, or in resentment for some affront; a woman dies after an

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775 626 unsettled quarrel with her husband or one of her co-wives; and a ghost is forgotten by his kin. It is said that if a corpse smells it is a sign that the dead person is ill disposed. As the Luo regard the ghosts as one of the principal causes of sickness and other misfortunes and since it is believed that almost any wrong done to a kinsman may be punished by him after his death, it may be supposed that this representation is a powerful sanction of conduct within the family and kin. I was told that any old person who is neglected may cause a relative to be more attentive by the threat 'You will see me,' meaning that when the person is dead he will haunt those who have neglected him unless they make amends. People who are happy and contented in life do not cause trouble when they are dead. It is the disgruntled and resentful who cause trouble.

753 755 775 [787] Luo who fall sick get a diviner (*ajuoga*) to discover the cause, and if he says that the sickness is due to a particular ghost on account of some grievance they hasten to compensate (*colo*) the ghost for the wrong they have done him by sacrificing an animal or fowl at his grave. It is customary to sacrifice a quail or fowl for a sick woman and a sheep or goat for a sick man. When a beast is sacrificed it is first tethered while whoever is conducting the ceremony makes an invocation (*lamo*) over it. If the sacrifice is acceptable to the ghost the animal urinates. They then rub its back (*wiro*) with the moist earth where it has urinated, and afterwards sacrifice it. The meat is eaten by the sick man's kin and a strip of the skin is tied round his wrist.

755 775 If the *jacien* is not appeased by sacrifice they may get a magician called *mugalu* to protect the sick man's homestead. He buries a pot containing medicines in or just outside the homestead. If the ghost continues to cause trouble they summon an exorcist (*jadilo*). He first sacrifices an ox and warns the dead man that if he is not content with this sacrifice he will dig up his bones and burn them and throw the ashes into lake or marsh. Luo told me that they prefer to get a Bantu to do this for them, if it is found to be necessary, and that sometimes instead of digging up the dead man's bones the exorcist makes a hole in the grave and pours boiling water down it.

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783 It seems that normally it is only kinsmen who haunt a man, but any man who kills another, whether he be related to him or not, is in danger of ghostly vengeance. For this reason a Luo does not care to spear an adulterer found with his wife. Also, as Roscoe says, a man who slays another in war may be injured by his ghost if certain rites are not performed. These purificatory rites, called *gut*, are conducted by a man, called *jagut*, who has himself killed a man and been through the ceremony. The slayer comes back from the fight to his homestead with a crowd of his companions, who make a demonstration there, singing and pulling out the eaves of his mother's hut. His father and mother strip themselves and cover their bodies with ashes. The slayer remains outside the homestead and there the *jagut* pierces the beak of a fowl and hangs it round his neck. He then cuts the beak of the fowl and it is killed when it falls. The slayer may now enter the homestead, but not through the gateway. A special entrance is cut for him through the euphorbia hedge which encircles the homestead.

[p. 87a]

775 He goes straight to the hut of the *pim*, the old woman
783 of the home, and there a goat is thumped and kicked to death. Afterwards it is skinned and cut open. The heart is extracted and bits of it are put by the *jagut* to the lips of the slayer and of some of his companions. He cuts strips from the skin of the goat and lays them along the backs of the slayer's fingers. He also gives the slayer medicines, among them a wild pig's tusk, which the slayer wears round his neck. The man is now purified and may drink milk again.

[114] Roscoe's account is very different from that given to me by Luo, which I have recounted above.

775 Clearly there is much more to be discovered about Luo beliefs about ghosts than what I have recorded, but I can only add to my account that the word *jociendi* is sometimes used for ghosts in general—and not with special reference to troublesome ghosts—and that some ghosts appear to be thought to become nature spirits dwelling in water and in the air, and others to occupy the gourds used by diviners and to answer questions the diviners put to them.

[p. 87 b]

Burial Customs of the Wa-Kavirondo in the Kisumu Province. 35

By A. S. Millikin

764 When a Kavirondo dies he or she, as the case may be, is stripped of everything in the shape of clothing and ornaments and these, as a rule, are distributed amongst the children, should the dead person have any; if not, they are taken by the near relatives. As soon as the person has expired the relatives in the same "boma" commence howling and crying, and in some cases this is done before the sick person has expired, but is close to death.

The first persons informed of the death are those relatives and friends residing close at hand, who arrive quickly to join in the mourning and do their share of crying.

The relatives and friends from a distance begin to arrive decked out in all their finery, bringing food for the dead, and also some of their cattle, as a rule a few cow and [765] bull calves. The mourning lasts for about a fortnight, but the body is kept only for about five hours after death, when it is buried underneath the floor of the hut of the dead person; but should several people have been buried there before and no space left, the body is buried just outside the hut, on the left-hand side.

As a rule after one person is buried in the hut, if it is intended to bury a second, and even a third person in the same hut, it is customary to knock out the back part of the hut and enlarge it.

● 775 The Kavirondo belief is that the dead can hear, and this is their reason for burying their dead in and close to their huts, as they like the dead to hear what they say.

764 The grave is dug about 4 feet deep and is circular, and the dead person is put there in a doubléd-up position. The body is buried quite naked, but sometimes the skin on which the person slept, or which he wore, is placed at the bottom of the grave.

When the grave is filled up, the earth is put back in small pieces, and is pressed tightly down, so that when all the soil is put back the surface is absolutely level, and to the casual observer it would not appear that the earth had been disturbed. As a precaution against hyænas and other wild animals a species of cactus is placed for a few days over the grave.

765 Should the dead person be a grown male, the wife or mother or the nearest relative of the dead man will cry continually for three months for about an hour before day break, but will stop when day breaks.

A peculiar custom is followed by the near relatives, who, during the first few days of mourning, smear their faces with wood ashes.

764 When a grown-up person dies, male or female, neighbours will come and hold a "ngoma" (dance), dressed up in all their finery, especially the warriors, who walk into the "boma" and march round on the inside, passing the hut of the dead person and sticking their spears into the roof of the hut. They continue to march round two or three times, finally passing the dead person's hut and withdrawing their spears,

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

avoid the immediate consequences and as a result war broke out between the people of Seme and the people of his tribe, Ugenya. After many years of intermittent and bitter warfare the elders of both tribes met to settle the dispute. Their solution was as follows: because the elder who lost his son did not have an unmarried son to take a woman of the killer's clan, and because the killer's minimal lineage did not have a suitable daughter to give in marriage, it was decided that the killer should marry the daughter of the deceased's father, and through her raise seed to the dead man. The killer, contrary to custom but as part of the settlement, was forced to live at the home of his bride and was subsequently adopted into the clan of the deceased. It is interesting, however, that the eponym of the clan which today traces descent from this couple is the bride, Kia, and not the killer or the deceased. It is, to my knowledge, the only clan in Luo which has a woman as an eponym, but then she was apparently regarded as a male by her contemporaries.

This background was given to provide the reader with some idea of the Joluo attitude to homicide. Deeply ingrained is the notion that life goes on after death on earth—that ancestors in the spirit world are able to influence the lives, conduct, fortunes, for good or evil, of their descendants. Ghosts are more likely to be benevolent if they can count numerous descendants on earth and extremely malevolent if life on earth was cut short by violence or unnatural death by war, accident, or suicide. The ghosts of the latter are believed to be more difficult to deal with than those of ordinary spirits of old men or women. The more descendants a ghost has, the higher its status in the afterworld, and therefore the greater its pleasure and benevolence.

The Joluo had developed several devices to deal with cases of homicide. A wife could be married in the name of a murdered youth to raise seed to his name, to placate his spirit and to continue his line for posterity. A young adolescent woman who died was deflowered by a stranger (*jokawiny*)